

THE FOUNDATIONS OF EAST ASIA

By ICHIRO HARA

The formation of "Grossraums" such as East Asia and Greater Europe is so new a development that outmoded ideas and yardsticks are still being used to deal with them. The most common error is to assume that "Grossraum" and "empire" are the same. This is not the case. Empires such as that of Britain and of Alexander the Great grew mainly through the chance results of trade or battle and through the motive of profit or glory for the empire builders. The builders of the modern "Grossraum" believe that their constructions have more reliable foundations.

We have asked Mr. Hara to contribute an article stating what he considers to be the true foundations for East Asia's unity. Our author obtained his degree of Master of Arts from the Tokyo Imperial University and is now professor at the Tung Wen University in Shanghai. After starting out with the study of English literature and doing work in the field of criticism of modern poetry, he has in recent years shifted his interest—as did most of his countrymen—to fields more directly connected with the problems of our time. In particular he has been studying the culture of the East as compared to that of the West.—K.M.

IT WAS on August 1, 1940, that the words "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" were for the first time officially used by the Japanese Government. But at that time, except for Japan, Manchukuo, and China, the areas to be included in the sphere were still vague, and the words sounded more like wishful thinking. Now, less than two years later, the Co-Prosperity Sphere embraces, besides the three countries mentioned, French Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya, the East Indies, and Burma, and soon might even encompass Australia and India. For these wide, diverse areas to be unified and moulded into an organic whole, the various peoples living there must have some essential common factors.

"COMMUNITY OF DESTINY"

The common factor which we should primarily search for in the peoples that make up the Co-Prosperity Sphere would be neither a cultural nor a racial one, but a political or politico-economic one, because a *Grossraum* like the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere is above all a politico-economic unit. To secure her national existence under present world conditions, Japan is under the imperative necessity of establishing, in East Asia and the Western Pacific, a large political region that can afford her satisfactory

defense areas and economic self-sufficiency. However, as most of the countries in East Asia, apart from Japan herself, have been reduced to colonial or semi-colonial status by some Western Powers, Japan, in her efforts to establish such a political sphere, cannot but conflict with those Western Powers which are unwilling to modify the *status quo* in East Asia.

The East Asiatic peoples are eager to be liberated from this bondage to the Western Powers and to attain national independence. But they must realize that the days of pure nationalism as well as imperialistic colonization of the nineteenth-century type have passed, and that the re-organization of the earth's surface into several *Grossraums* appears to be the fundamental trend of present-day history. If this is so, no people in East Asia can attain its independence as an East Asiatic people without co-operating with Japan, who alone is really qualified to be the leading nation of the East Asiatic *Grossraum*, while Japan cannot maintain her national existence without establishing a Co-Prosperity Sphere with her neighboring peoples. It is this regional as well as political *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (community of destiny) that is now combining all the East Asiatics into one mighty unit. Of course, not all

the East Asiatics are clearly conscious of this common destiny. But gradually the trend of actual developments will make all East Asiatics aware of it. This "community of destiny" is the first and most fundamental factor which they have in common.

IS ASIA ONE?

Although the Co-Prosperity Sphere is primarily a political affair, it must become as unified as possible in the cultural sense too; for no human community can be complete without possessing cultural unity among its constituent parts. Therefore, it is a favorable condition for the building of the Co-Prosperity Sphere if the constituent peoples already possess cultural unity to some considerable degree. Can we find any unity in the cultures of the various peoples in question?

Tenshin Okakura, one of Japan's great art critics and profound thinkers, known to Westerners as the author of *The Book of Tea*, began another book, *The Ideals of the East*, with the following words:

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations: the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment that broad expanse of love for the Ultimate and Universal which is the common thought-inheritance of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from those maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life.

Okakura wrote these words in 1903, and the opening sentence: "Asia is one," is now being enthusiastically taken up by the Pan-Asianists in Japan as prophetic of the present situation.

In contrast to this, Dr. Sauro Tsuda, a scholar of Oriental cultures, asserts in his *Chinese Thought and Japan* (1938) that, although Europe is a world compactly united by the Classical tradition and Christianity, Asia has never had such unity. The influence of Buddhism in China and that of Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan have been merely superficial. Japan, China, and India are three different worlds. This argument of Dr. Tsuda's has been the cause of much dispute among intellectual circles in Japan.

Is Asia one or not? It need hardly be said that Asia is not such a compactly unified world as Europe. Take, for example, the religious aspect of Asia. How heterogeneous it is! Side by side we find Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Hinduism, Shamanism, Christianity, and so on.

However, if we look at East Asia with more penetrating insight, we do find some bases or conditions for a cultural unity existing there. They are merely bases or conditions. But as the foundations on which to develop a cultural unity in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere they are solid enough. Let us survey them from two points of view—the ethnological and the geographical.

THE RACES OF EAST ASIA

It goes without saying that the races to be found within such vast areas as the Co-Prosperity Sphere, extending over southeastern Asia and the western Pacific, are fairly heterogeneous. If we classify the races by hair-form, we find there, besides straight-haired peoples, who constitute what are generally called East Asiatics, both curly-haired and woolly-haired peoples too. The curly-haired peoples are the Hindus in India, the Proto-Nordics (such as the Ainu in Japan), the Proto-Indics (the jungle tribes of southern India, the Vedda, the Sakai, and the Senoi in Malaya, etc.), the Australian aborigines, the Nesiots (found in mixture with the straight-haired Proto-Malays in Malaysia and southeast Asia), and the Chersiot (South India). The woolly-haired peoples are the Negritos (found in the Andaman Islands, the Malay Peninsula, eastern Sumatra, the Philippine Islands, and New Guinea) and the Melanesians (Papuan).

But it is the straight-haired peoples who constitute the main body of the population of all of Greater East Asia except India. They are roughly divided into two groups, the northern and the southern. To the former belong the Mongols, the Turks, the Tungus, etc., while the latter includes the southern Chinese, the Thai, the Burmese, the

Proto-Malays in southeastern Asia and the Indonesian Islands, etc. The Polynesians are said to be Proto-Malays mixed with curly-haired Nesiots.

We find all these peoples more or less intermixed in their elements, thus forming a continuity of blood-relationship like a network. There is hardly a single pure race to be found among them. The Japanese, the Chinese, the Mongols, the Turks, the Annamese, the Cambodians, the so-called Indonesians, the so-called Malays, etc., all of them are mixed peoples. Let us take the anthropological formation of the Chinese and Japanese peoples as examples.

THE ORIGIN OF CHINESE AND JAPANESE

According to Dr. Chi Li, an authority on Chinese anthropology, the racial elements forming the modern Chinese are: what he calls the Descendants of the Yellow Emperor (Proto-Chinese), the Tungus, the Tibeto-Burman, the Mon-Khmer, the Shan (Thai), the Turk, the Mongol, and the Negrito. The northern and the southern Chinese differ considerably in their physical characteristics. This difference may be ascribed to the fact that, while southern Chinese are chiefly of southern Asiatic derivation, northern Chinese contain a good deal of blood-mixture from the Tungus and other northern stocks.

The anthropological formation of the Japanese is still undecided. Most Japanese scholars maintain that the chief element in the Japanese must have been of northern derivation, while such an anthropologist as Haddon classifies it as belonging to the southern group. I will quote here Professor Shinji Nishimura's theory, which is very popular and influential in Japan, though it is rather neglected by academic circles.

A POPULAR THEORY

According to Prof. Nishimura, the main element in the Japanese is the Tungus belonging to the northern Asiatic, or Arctic, group, the subsidiary elements being the Indo-Chinese, the Original-Indonesian, the Chinese, the Mongol, the Ainu (a Proto-Nordic people), and the Negrito (very slightly). It must be re-

membered that, though the component elements are as heterogeneous as this, the process of their inter-fusion was completed during prehistoric times or the very early days of Japanese history. Moreover, the degree of interfusion is almost perfect. Hence that rare unity of national consciousness belonging to the Japanese people.

This theory involves the admission that the basic part of Japanese culture is of Altaic or Siberian origin. This is of paramount importance, as it ethnologically connects the Japanese with the Manchus, who are typically Tungusic, and with the Koreans, who are most probably Tungusic. According to the supporters of this northernist theory, Shintoism, the native religion of Japan, is derived from Shamanism, the primitive religion prevalent in Siberia, and the Japanese language is a branch of the Altaic, or Ural-Altaic, language family.

Although Prof. Nishimura gives to the Tungusic element the chief position in the formation of the Japanese people, he nevertheless does not neglect the importance of the Indo-Chinese element in its effect on the constitution of Japanese culture. What he means by the term "Indo-Chinese" is a group comprising the Annamese, the Mons, the Khmers (Cambodians) in Indo-China, and the Miaos, the Yaos, etc., in southern China. Though the ethnological lineage of the Miao-Yaos is still obscure, the Mon-Khmers and the Annamese are said to be the resultants of the mixture of the Original-Indonesians with other elements. By "Original-Indonesian" I mean a race which was probably composed of a Caucasian stock, occupying southeastern Asia at a very early date.

LANGUAGE RELATIONS

It was, in fact, the Indo-Chinese who brought rice cultivation, sericulture, terrace cultivation, several forms of farming implements, etc., to Japan. P. W. Schmidt, the great Austrian comparative-linguist, classified the languages of the Mon-Khmers, the Annamese, the Mundas in India, the Khassi in Assam, the Palaung and Wa in Burma, the Sakai and

Semang in the Malay Peninsula, and the Nicobarese under one category with the denomination of "Austroasiatic" group, and, further, related it with the "Austro-nesian" language group which comprises the Indonesian, Polynesian, and Melanesian languages. And recently many Austroasiatic cognate words have been found in the Japanese vocabulary by such a scholar as Professor Nobuhiro Matsumoto. These facts serve closely to connect Japan with Indo-China and Indonesia.

According to Professor Enku Uno, the Indonesians in Malaysia and the Austroasiatic peoples in Indo-China, South China, and India seem to have developed a common primitive religion and agrarian culture in ancient days, and the peculiarities of that religion and culture were rice ritual and rice cultivation. Prof. Uno maintains that Shintoism is of the same origin as this primitive religion. Thus we have two theories, the northernist and the southernist, of the origin of Shintoism. Would it not, however, seem highly probable that Shintoism is the outcome of the fusion of the two?

"SAME RACE, SAME LETTERS"

The old annals of Japan clearly tell us that in ancient times the Chinese frequently came over to Japan in large groups and were naturalized there. They introduced into Japan such valuable cultural elements as the ideographs, Confucianism, Buddhism and its arts, the silk industry, etc., during the so-called Six Dynasties (六朝), as well as during the Sui (隋) and T'ang (唐) Dynasties. The Japanese and the Chinese are often diplomatically described as *do-shu do-bun* (同種同文, same race, same letters). The possession of a common form of writing is merely a superficial attribute, and racially the two peoples differ considerably. But the fact that their blood has many elements in common, as mentioned above, should be more fully recognized by both parties.

C. K. Parker, an American comparative-linguist, has recently made the discovery that Tibeto-Burman is an important factor in the Japanese language. Whether

the Tibeto-Burman element was brought into Japan by the Tibeto-Burmese themselves or by some Austroasiatic people whose language had been highly Tibeto-Burmanized, this discovery must be regarded as an extremely significant one now that Burma has joined the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Thus we have seen that, although East Asia is racially heterogeneous, the peoples there are more or less intermixed in their elements and form a blood continuity like a network. It is this continuity that I have previously called a "basis for cultural unity," for on this basis the common culture of the East Asiatic *Grossraum* may best be created.

SUPERIORITY THROUGH COMPLEXITY

We have also seen that almost all the important racial elements in East Asia have been absorbed and completely fused into one in the Japanese blood. It is often said that the present efforts of the Japanese to establish the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere can, in a sense, be regarded as a movement to return to their original homes on the continent and in the southern archipelagoes (whence their forefathers once came) after a long period of amalgamation and refinement in the Japanese Islands.

Culturally speaking, Japan has assimilated the Siberian (Tungusic), Indo-Chinese (Mon-Khmer), Chinese, and Indian elements in developing a unique culture of her own, and she is now endeavoring adequately to correlate it with the Western civilization and culture she has absorbed since the Meiji Restoration. This complex constitution of the Japanese people and culture must be regarded as the happiest qualification for her to be the nuclear, organizing nation of the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Incidentally, it is interesting that, while some German theorists find the reason for the superiority of the German people in its purity of Nordic blood, Japanese ethnologists find the strong point of their own people in its complexity of formation, on the ground that a law of heredity preserves, after many generations, only so-called *dominant* superior

factors in a mixed race, rejecting *recessive* inferior ones.

WHERE THE MONSOONS BLOW

Now let us turn to the geographical point of view. When looking over the vast region of Greater East Asia from that viewpoint, what common factors can we find there?

The most remarkable of all is the monsoon, that seasonal wind prevailing in southeastern Asia, blowing from the southwest in summer with much rainfall and from the northeast in winter. Though this wind is a mere geographical factor, it has had profound influence, not only on the economic and social life, but even on the spiritual life of all the peoples living in the area where it prevails.

The monsoon area extends over India, Indo-China, the East Indies, China proper, Japan, Korea, the maritime regions of Manchukuo, etc., and this coincides precisely with the essential parts of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Indeed, Professor Karl Haushofer was right in prophesying, as early as 1923, the establishment, under the leadership of Japan, of an East Asiatic *Grossraum* to the extent of the monsoon area.

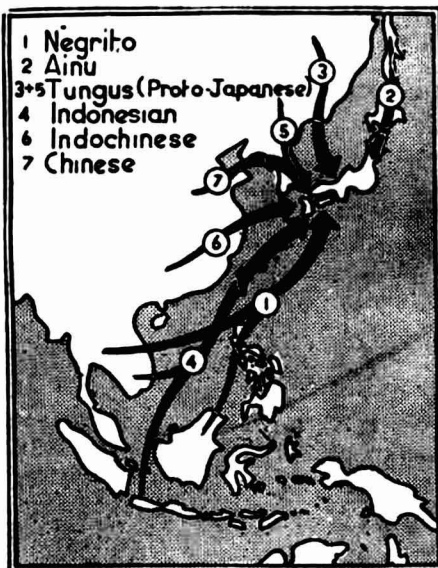
The importance of the monsoon is not in the wind itself but in the ample rainfall and humidity which it brings with it in summer. The most conspicuous example of the influence of this rainfall in the field of economics is seen in rice cultivation, for the rice plant is a typical monsoon plant. Its cultivation needs an ample precipitation and a fairly high temperature, which only the monsoon climate can afford. This condition has produced a rice-eating population of 800 millions in southeastern Asia and made the region the main rice-cultivating area in the world.

CLIMATE AND MENTALITY

The peoples of East Asia indeed share a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* in the monsoon climate. The heavy rainfall afforded by the monsoon has inevitably prescribed the fundamental forms of economic and social life: it has made economic life in that area essentially agricultural. This in turn has greatly helped to preserve the system and mentality of the old communal society based on blood-relationship and regional relationship. And further, these sociological conditions have had a

profound effect on the customs and manners and cultures of all the peoples within the domain of the monsoon.

Professor Tetsuo Watsuji, brilliant cultural critic, in his admirable book *The Climate* (originally given as a lecture in 1928) sees in the monsoon the fundamental climatic influence that has prescribed the character common to the mentalities of all East Asiatics. He considers the Indian mentality the most typical example of this. The



Chronological Formation of the Japanese Race

Indian monsoon brings almost unbearable moisture and heat with it, from which men have no other relief than to suffer it patiently. Hence that suffering, submissive mentality of the Indians. And this mentality is more or less common to all the peoples in the monsoon area. How different are the Indians from their Aryan brothers in Europe! The monsoon, with other factors, has in a sense "acclimatized," or "East-Asianized," them.

However, the monsoon region is so extensive in area and so complex in topography that the climates and mentalities conditioned by it cannot be entirely alike throughout. Let us take the case of the Japanese, as explained by Prof. Watsuji. The Japanese "suffering, submissive" mentality conditioned by the monsoon is subtly modified by two other

climatic factors: (1) the double structure of the Japanese climate, which is "tropic-frigid," and (2) the typhoon, that is "at the same time seasonal and bursting." These complicated conditions produce that unique mentality of the Japanese people, which is "quiet passion, fighting non-pertinacity."

Be that as it may, the influence of the monsoon climate upon the East Asiatic cultures is profound. We can find good evidence of this in a common characteristic seen in all the religions originating in the monsoon area.

HUMIDITY, MEN, AND GOD

It is said that all the great religions of the world originated in Asia. But we must remember that there are two Asias—humid eastern Asia and arid western Asia. And the religions which grew up in the deserts of western Asia are characteristically different from those which grew up in the moist atmosphere of eastern Asia in their respective attitudes towards Nature. The gods of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are personal gods who are in opposition to, or transcend, the World or Nature; while the gods, or the Absolute, of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism are impersonal ones who are essentially Nature herself or the Universe itself. The gods of Shintoism may be personal, but, being homogeneous with Nature, they do not transcend the World like the gods of the religions of Semitic origin. In the former group of religions, Man must oppose

himself to the World or Nature in complete submission to his God; while in the latter group Man is required to become one with the World or Nature. This cosmotheistic attitude of the East Asiatic religions is evidenced in the union of Brahman and Atman in Brahmanism, the unity with the Universe through the achievement of "non-ego" in Buddhism, the oneness with Nature in Taoism, the union of Heaven and Man in Confucianism, and that essential homogeneity of the gods, the earth, all the natural beings on it, the sovereign, and the subjects in Shintoism, on which both the absolute loyalty of the Japanese to their Emperor and the ideal of "The Eight Corners of the World under One Roof" are based.

The cosmotheistic consciousness common to all the religions originating in southeastern Asia may be chiefly ascribed to the influence of the settled agricultural life and the attachment to the soil on the part of the peoples living in the monsoon area and to the humid atmosphere which makes men feel a subtle interfusion of all things.

The Co-Prosperity Sphere will be incomplete without achieving a consciousness of the organic oneness of all the component peoples and their union with the great space where they are destined to live together. And the cosmotheistic attitude towards the World will be a most adequate and favorable basis upon which that uniting consciousness may be realized.

